

February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Senator Carlo Leone, Co-Chairman  
Representative David Baram, Co-Chairman  
Members of the General Law Committee

RE: SB-158, An Act Concerning Landscape Architect Licenses

I am writing this letter to express my concern and opposition to SB-158, An Act Concerning Landscape Architect Licenses. It is not clear what the real intent of SB-158 is other than "to allow holders of bachelor's degrees with three years' practical experience to be licensed as landscape architects" as stated in the language of the proposed Bill. The Bill does *not* state that the bachelor's degree would need to be in landscape architecture *nor* does it define what 'practical experience' is. Currently 'experience' is defined as working under a licensed landscape architect. The Bill would also circumvent the requirement for the nationally accepted LARE exam, a four-part professional exam which *all* 50 states require to gain licensure. Furthermore, it would eliminate the requirement to acquire a degree from a college program accredited by the Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB), such as UConn's landscape architectural program. This action is unprecedented in any State. Approving this Bill would have grave consequences and compromise the responsibility of the State to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

As a shareholder and licensed landscape architect at the largest collaborative design firm in Connecticut I am very concerned this will compromise our ability to practice successfully. The SLAM Collaborative is a successful practice with landscape architecture, architecture, structural engineering, interior design, and construction services. We have a national presence at some of the finest institutions in the country including the University of Notre Dame, Emory University, and Johns Hopkins University. By weakening the requirements for licensure it will compromise our ability to gain reciprocity of licensure in other States and therefore our ability to bring revenue into the State of Connecticut. We currently design projects up to \$400 million dollars in construction cost. It is not rational to suggest that the landscape architectural portion of our projects with complex requirements to provide for high volume pedestrian circulation while still maintaining access for emergency vehicles, tractor trailers, and buses could be documented for construction by someone with no formal schooling in landscape architecture from an accredited program, no professional testing to verify their skill sets, and no professional experience under the supervision of a trained and licensed landscape architect.

As a citizen I am very concerned that the public health, safety, and welfare will be negatively impacted. A well trained and licensed landscape architect can design complex planning, grading, erosion control, stormwater management, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, emergency access, environmental design, and protection of natural resources such as wetlands, soils, and wildlife. To suggest that any person with any type of bachelor's degree and three years of 'relative experience' that is not under the

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supervision of a licensed and experienced landscape architect is not safe and is not in keeping with the responsibility of the State to protect the public.

As an alumnus of the University of Connecticut and advocate of the landscape architectural program at UCONN I am very concerned that the ability for the University of Connecticut to attract students will be compromised when it will no longer be required in the State to have a degree from an accredited program or even a degree in landscape architecture at all. The landscape architectural program at UCONN is a fully accredited program that has fought hard to maintain a high quality program and has grown in quantity of students as a result. Passing SB-158 would unravel that significant effort. It is highly inappropriate that this Bill was suggested and is not respectful of the time and resources expended to build the landscape architectural program at the University of Connecticut.

It is my suspicion that this Bill was put forth without a proper understanding of the profession of landscape architecture which is highly respected nationally and internationally. Nor was the Bill put forth with a proper understanding of the grave consequences of its passage. The licensure standard is well respected by peer professionals and government officials, who trust that our work will follow local, state and federal regulations and adequately protect the public health, safety and welfare in the design of public and private outdoor spaces. We are currently preparing for an interview for improvements to the Ella Grasso Technical School in Groton which has a project cost of \$135,000,000 and an estimated site construction cost of \$10,000,000. It is simply not logical that the landscape architectural work required for that project be completed by someone meeting the requirements of one sentence: "...that a person who holds a bachelor's degree and three years of relevant experience may be licensed as a landscape architect.".

I respectfully request you to oppose SB-158. Please do not hesitate to ask if you have any questions or concerns in regards to this letter.

Sincerely,

*The **S / L / A / M** Collaborative*

Daniel J. Granniss, PLA, ASLA, LEED AP